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ABSTRACT

In 1990, a national survey was conducted of state directors of community and junior colleges regarding student transfer reporting and analysis. Responses were received from 45 of 50 states for a 90% response rate, although Maine and South Dakota were dropped from the study because they indicated that they did not have a community college system. Study findings included the following: (1) 8 states (19%) indicated they had an official definition of transfer, while another 20 states (47%) used a working definition of student transfer for reporting purposes; (2) 31 states (72%) had the capacity to report the number of students who transferred from public community colleges to public four-year/upper-division colleges; (3) five states (16%) calculated a student transfer rate, while two states (5%) were reassessing their student transfer rate formulas; (4) seven states (16%) recommended the use of the most general data available to compute a student transfer rate, while 26 states (60%) either were uncertain about the most effective way to compute a transfer rates or did not respond; (5) 23 state directors (53%) reported having the authority to adopt a national transfer reporting and analysis standard should one be recommended, and 11 state directors (26%) were prepared to recommend such a standard or policy in their states, while 30 (70%) were uncertain/did not respond and 2 (5%) would not recommend such adoption; and (6) responses from 14 state directors indicated that the time required to implement such a standard on transfer ranged from 6 months to 4 years, with the average being 20 months. A copy of the test instrument, response totals, and pie-charts are included. (JMC)

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE DIRECTORS OF COMMUNITY/JUNIOR COLLEGES

Committee to Study the Definition of College Transfer

Survey of State Directors on Student Transfer Reporting and Analysis

Dale F. Campbell
September 1, 1990

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE DIRECTORS OF COMMUNITY/JUNIOR COLLEGES

Committee to Study the Definition of College Transfer

Survey of State Directors on Student Transfer Reporting and Analysis

An Overview of the Findings

Recommendation:

That the National Council explore the possibilities for a pilot demonstration project to study the definition of transfer student and to test different models of state reporting for analysis of student transfer trends and that it investigate the availability of resources to undertake such an effort.

Major findings: 45 States (90%) responded to the survey, but only 43 states were used in the analysis since two states (Maine and South Dakota) indicated that they do not have a community college system.

1) Policy Reporting Responsibility: Eight State community college agencies (19%) are responsible for reporting to state legislative bodies on student transfer.

2) Definition of Student Transfer:

   a. Eight States (19%) have an official definition of transfer.

   b. Another 20 States (47%) use a working definition of student transfer for reporting purposes.

3) State Reporting Capacity:

   31 States (72%) have the capacity to report the number of students who transfer from public community colleges to public four-year/upper-division colleges.

4) Computation of Student Transfer Rates

   a. Five States (16%) currently calculate a student transfer rate.

   b. Two States (5%) are reassessing their student transfer rate formulae.

5) State Agency Perspectives on the Most Valid Approach to Compute Student Transfer Rates

   a. Seven States (16%) would recommend use of the most general data available to compute a student transfer rate.

   b. 26 States (60%) appear to be uncertain about the most effective way to compute a student transfer rate or did not respond.

6) The Role of the National Council and the State Directors

a. Authority to adopt a national standard: 23 State Directors (53%) report their having the authority to adopt a national reporting and analysis standard or policy on transfer should one be recommended.

b. Position on adopting such a standard: Eleven State Directors (26%) are presently prepared to recommend adopting such a standard or policy in their states, while 30 (70%) are uncertain or did not respond, and 2 (5%) would not recommend such adoption.

c. Time required for implementation of such a standard: Responses from 14 State Directors range from 6 months to 4 years, with an average of 20 months.

Conclusions:

The National Council should assist its members to address the need for accountability with respect to student transfer. It can best do this by working with States which have existing policies or which are currently developing reporting and analysis models and with other states interested in technical assistance to support their planning and capacity building for transfer reporting system development.

Note: 45 states responded to the survey:

Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia.

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National Council of State Directors of Community/Junior Colleges

Committee to Study the Definition of College Transfer

SURVEY FINDINGS
(October 1, 1990)

1. Is your agency responsible for reporting to the state legislative body on student transfers for your state?

	Freq	Percent
Community college agency	8	19
Another state agency	6	14
No state agency	26	60
Other	3	7
Total	43	100

2. Does your state have an **OFFICIAL** definition (i.e., specified by stature and/or formally defined in rules or reporting procedures of the agency responsible for reporting) of "transfer student?"

	Freq	Percent
Yes	8	19
No	34	79
Other	1	2
Total	43	100

2-A. If YES, how does your state **OFFICIALLY** define "transfer student?"

Official Definition of Transfer: Diverse Elements of Current State Policies

Number of states reporting Yes: 8 out of 43 (19%)

Common Characteristics in Definition of a Transfer Student:

a) First-time transfer: A student seeking to enroll in another institution for the first time

b) Credential-seeking: A student with a goal of earning a degree or certificate in another institution

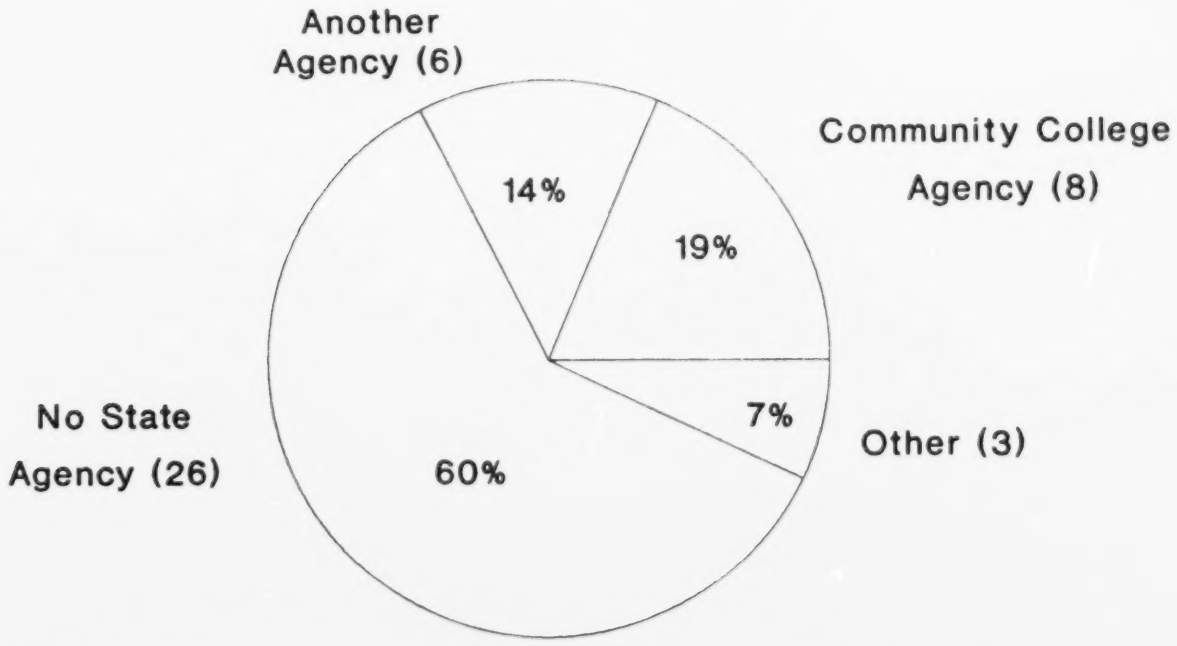
c) Credit-issue: A student who has earned or attempted some amount of academic credit at an initial institution

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. 1

FIGURE 1

State Reporting Responsibility for Student Transfer

(Number of States Responding in Parentheses)•



•Survey results from NCSDC/JC Committee to study the definition of College Transfer: n=43 (October 1990)

3. If NO to #2, does your state use a **WORKING** definition of "transfer student?"

	Freq	Percent
Yes	20	59
No	11	32
Other/No response	3	9
Total	34	100

3-a. If YES, what is the working definition of "transfer student?"

Working Definition of Transfer Student - A state's definition may be classified into more than one category. The number of states responding is indicated in parentheses below.

a. Most frequent type of definition: anyone accepted for transfer from one higher education institution to another. (12)

b. Second most frequent response types:

- Some states have highly articulated agreements which facilitate or guarantee transfer of course credits. (4)

- Each higher education institution has its own unique definition. (4)

c. Other characteristics of the working definitions:

(1) Working definitions based on earned credit: The state specifies a given number of semester credit hours earned at time of admission, ranging from 1 to 30 (with one state excluding correspondence courses, CLEP or other advanced standing test credits).

(2) Flexible working definitions: The state uses a variety of definitions, depending on the research and reporting requirements, with the state not having an official definition.

(3) Limitations on the working definition: Some states have very specific criteria or elements of a definition limited to certain groups; for example, they may identify one or more of the following:

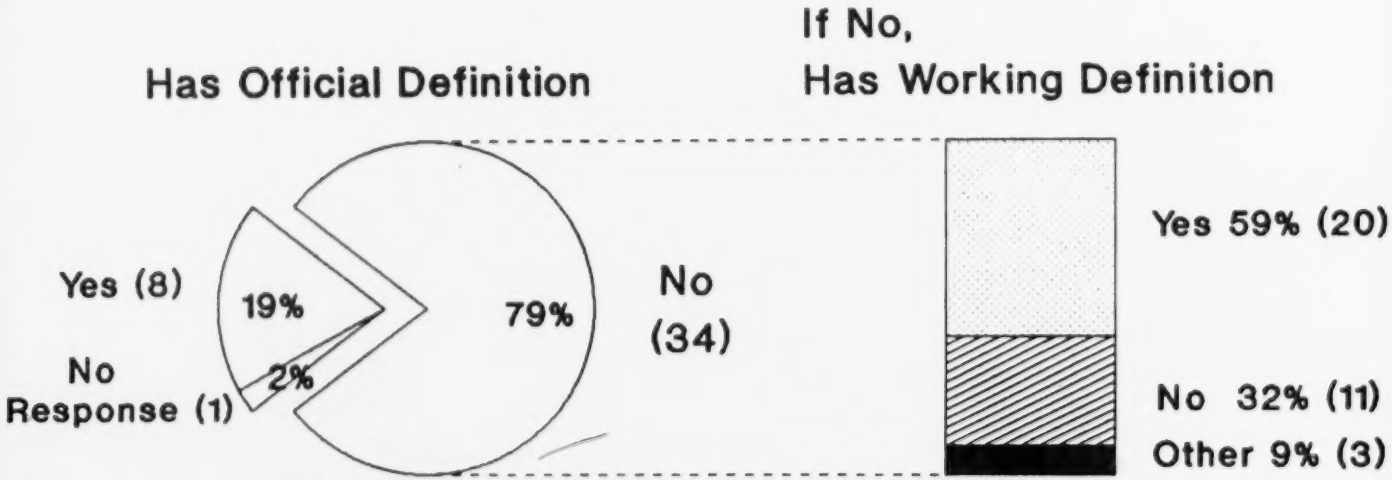
- first-time transfers,
- students from state community colleges,
- students who had full-time community college enrollment status prior to transfer,
- community college graduates,
- students with no Associate Degree,
- degree-seeking students, and
- a time-limit for transfer within four years of entering a community college

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

FIGURE 2

Definition of Transfer Student

(Number of States Reporting in Parentheses)•



•Preliminary results from NCSDC/JC Committee to study the definition of College Transfer: n=43 (Oct. 1990)

(4) No working definition: Among the states that do not have an official definition, almost one-third of them (11, or 32%) reported that they do not have a working definition of transfer students either.

4. Does your state's higher education data collection system (your agency and/or others) have the capacity to report the number of students who transfer from public community colleges to public four-year or upper-division colleges or universities?

	Freq	Percent
Yes	31	72
No	8	19
Other	4	9
Total	43	100

If YES, does your state compute student transfer rates?

	Freq	Percent
Yes	5	16
No	24	77
Other	2	7
Total	31	100

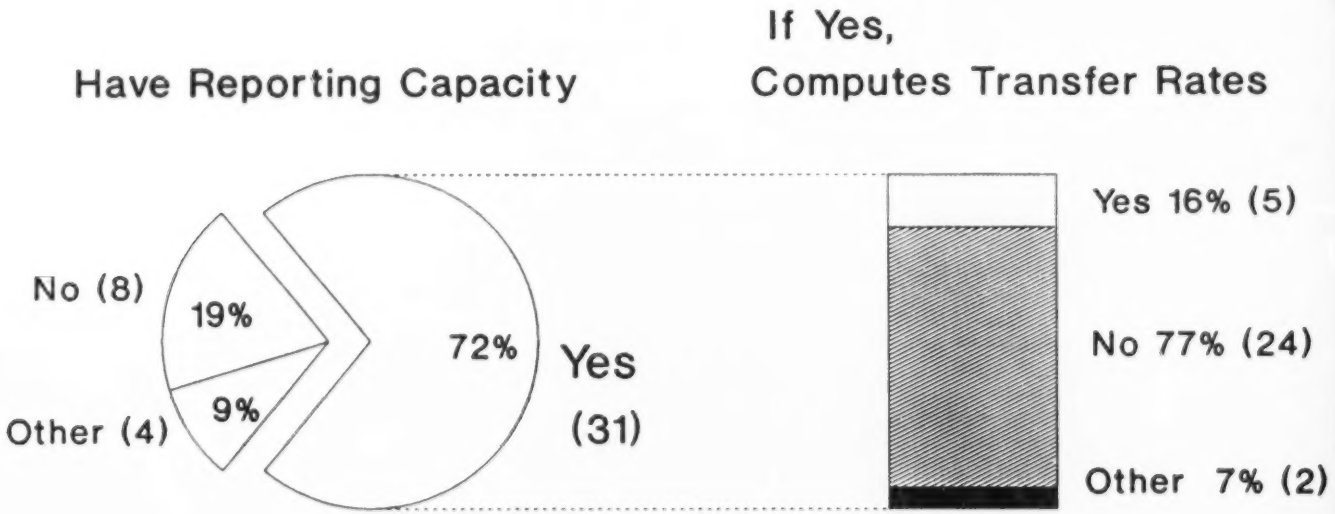
5-a. Which state agency is responsible to the state legislative body for the computation of transfer rates?

	Freq	Percent
Community College Agency	2	5
Another state agency	2	5
Other	2	5
No state agency/Do not compute transfer rates/No response	37	86
Total	43	100

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

States' Reporting Capacity on Student Transfer

(Number of States Reporting in Parentheses)•



•Survey results from NCSDC/JC Committee to study the definition of College Transfer: n=43 (Oct. 1990)

5-b. To compute a student transfer rate requires a formula: a numerator with the number of students who transfer and a denominator with the number of students enrolled who are eligible for transfer within a specified time period. What groups does your state currently use for the numerator and denominator in the computation of transfer rates from public community/junior colleges to public four-year or upper-division colleges and universities?

Computation of Student Transfer Rates: (n=43)

(1) States with formula (n=3, 7.0%)

New Mexico: A/F (A: Numerator = # of students who transfer from a public community college to a public four-year institution in a given year, divided by F: Denominator = # of unduplicated public community college students enrolled for credit in a given academic year)

Kentucky: Number of degree-seeking students (not including those with an associate degree) that attended a university the fall semester after attending a community college, divided by the number of headcount enrollees at the community college

Maryland: Denominator: First-time full-time, freshmen cohort who entered in prior year, divided by Numerator: Any of this cohort which has shown up in fall semester at a four-year campus (full-time or part-time) in subsequent four-year period.

(2) States currently reassessing their formula (n=2; 4.7%)

Colorado and Iowa

(3) Other comments, do not compute transfer rates or no response (n=38, 88.4%)

5-c. How regularly is the analysis done?

	Freq	Percent
Once a year	4	9
Once every two years	0	0
Once every three years	0	0
Once every four or more years	0	0
No set schedule	3	7
Other/Do not do analysis/ No response	36	84
Total	43	100

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

6-a. We are interested in understanding which data elements are available in your state (at your agency and /or others) which would permit the calculation of the following: (n=43)

		Data Elements Currently Available?			
		YES	NO	UNCERTAIN	NO RESPONSE
	NUMERATOR (TRANSFER DATA ELEMENTS)	Percent (n)	Percent (n)	Percent (n)	Percent (n)
(A)	# of students who transfer from a public community college to a public four-year institution in a given academic year	69.8 (30)	23.3 (10)	4.7 (2)	2.3 (1)
(B)	# of students who transfer from a public community college to a public four-year institution in a given academic year and who had earned at least 12 credit hours at the community college	48.8 (21)	41.9 (18)	7.0 (3)	2.3 (1)
(C)	# of students who transfer from a public community college to a public four-year institution in a given academic year, excluding students who had earned 6 or more credit hours at a four-year institution prior to or during that academic year	23.3 (10)	58.1 (25)	16.3 (7)	2.3 (1)
(D)	# of students who transfer from a public community college to a public four-year institution and who completed at least 12 credit hours at the four-year institution in a given academic year after their transfer	41.9 (18)	44.2 (19)	11.6 (5)	2.3 (1)
(E)	Combination of above or other (Please define):	4.7 (2)	0.0 (0)	4.7 (2)	90.7 (39)
	DENOMINATOR (ENROLLMENT DATA ELEMENTS)				
(F)	# of unduplicated public community college students enrolled for credit in a given academic year	88.4 (38)	4.7 (2)	0.0 (0)	7.0 (3)
(G)	# of unduplicated public community college students who had earned at least 12 credit hours at the end of a given academic year at the college	65.1 (28)	23.3 (10)	2.3 (1)	9.3 (4)
(H)	# of unduplicated public community college students who had not earned 6 or more credit hours at a four-year institution prior to or during a given academic year	27.9 (12)	53.5 (23)	9.3 (4)	9.3 (4)
(I)	# of unduplicated public community college students who enrolled in the college in any term during a given academic year but who did not re-enroll in the subsequent academic year	55.8 (24)	25.6 (11)	9.3 (4)	9.3 (4)
(J)	Combination of above or other (Please define):	7.0 (3)	0.0 (0)	4.7 (2)	88.4 (38)

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

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6-b. (a) Based on the above definitions of numerator and denominator and/or their combinations, please identify the data elements (by capital letters) that should be included in the computation of transfer rates to facilitate valid comparisons for your state:

Most Valid Approach

	Freq	Percent
Would recommend the most general data elements (A/F)	7	16
Would recommend more specific numerator and/or denominator	10	23
Uncertain	16	37
No response	10	23
Total	43	100

7. If the National Council of State Directors of Community/Junior Colleges and/or AACJC were to recommend a National reporting and analysis standard or policy on transfer:

a. Do you have authority to adopt it?

	Freq	Percent
Yes	23	53
No	6	14
Uncertain	7	16
No response	7	16
Total	43	100

b. Would you recommend adopting it in your state?

	Freq	Percent
Yes	11	26
No	2	5
Uncertain	24	56
No response	6	14
Total	43	100

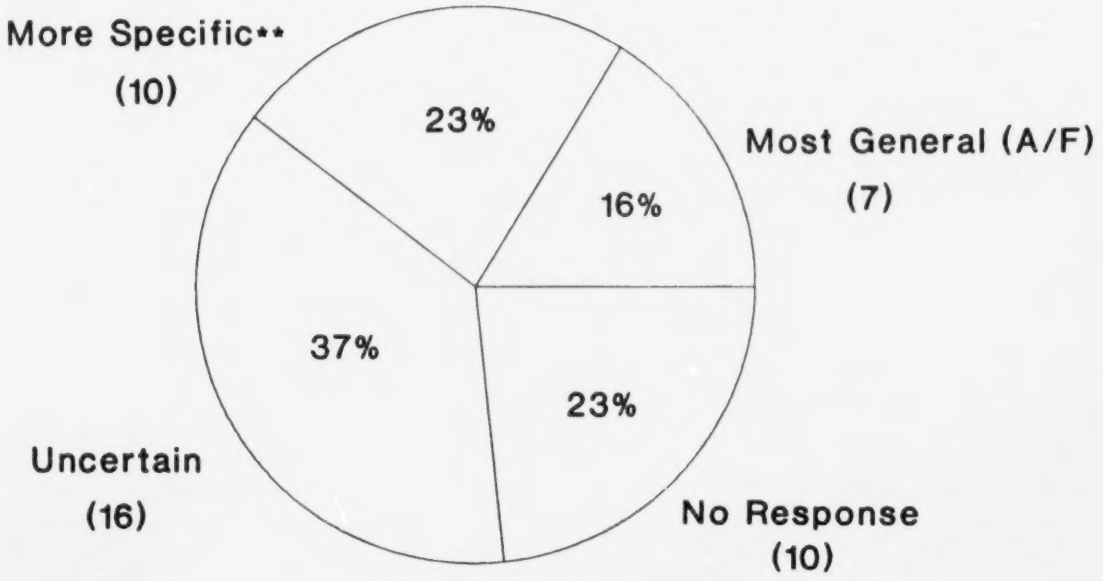
c. If YES to (a) and (b), how much time would be necessary to allow for modifications of reporting and analysis systems before full implementation in your state?

Average (n=14): 20 months

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Perception of State Community College Agencies: Most Valid Approach for Computing Student Transfer Rates

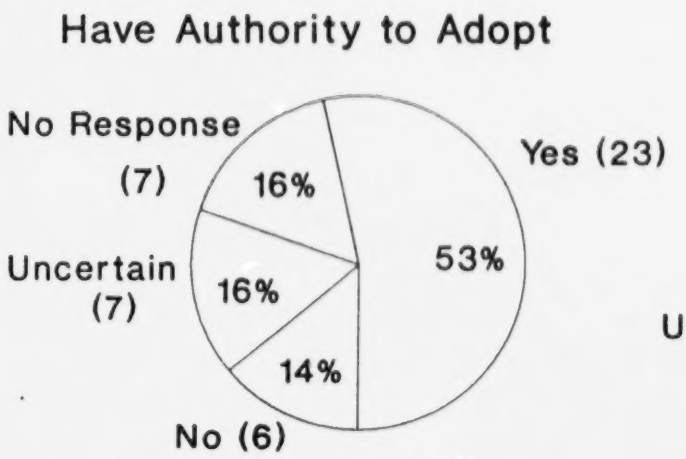
(Number of States Responding in Parentheses)•

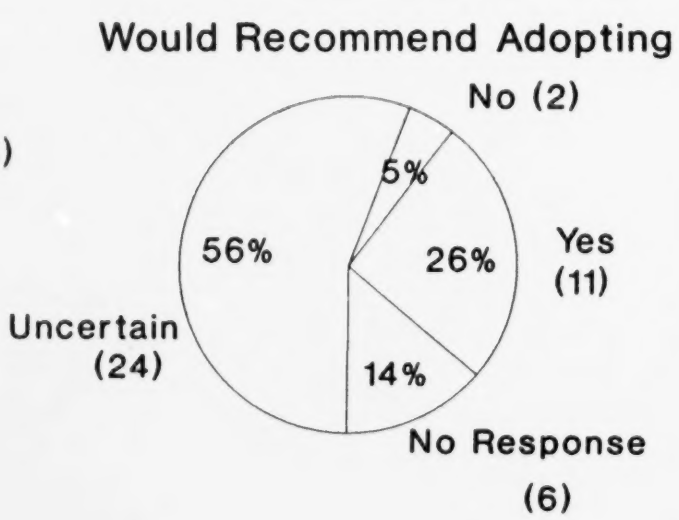


•Survey results from NCSDC/JC Committee to study the definition of College Transfer: n=43 (Oct. 1990)
••Use more specific numerator and/or denominator

State Community College Agency Directors: Adopting National Policy on Transfer

(Number of States Responding in Parentheses)•





•Survey results from NCSDC/JC Committee to study the definition of College Transfer: n=43 (Oct. 1990)

8. Other Concerns and Issues of Student Transfer Reporting and Analysis Identified in the National Council of State Directors Survey

(1) Problems with Student Transfer Rate Computation

a. Some states have unique higher education systems which obscure community college transfer issues

b. There are major difficulties in defining and measuring "student intent," yet it cannot be ignored in any analysis of transfer rates.

c. State may be able to obtain the necessary formula data elements from existing reporting systems, but institutions of higher education may not use standardized definitions of terms.

d. Several states challenged the usefulness of a single-measure student transfer rate.

e. Most colleges and states should probably report several different types of transfer rates.

f. Importance of defining critical student performance outcomes and institutional effectiveness measures rather than emphasizing student transfer rates

(2) Management Information System Problems

a. Smaller states may not have the expertise or resources.

b. Private colleges may not have the data collection capacity; exclusion of out-of-state transfer figures distorts any rate.

c. Community college student leavers often take several years off before they enroll in a four-year institution.

(3) Student Transfer Reporting and Analysis Models

a. States with existing definitions, articulation policies and/or reporting procedures of potential relevance: Washington, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Delaware, New Mexico and Rhode Island

b. States currently developing models which could potentially assist others in their planning for modifications of reporting systems:
California, Colorado, Maryland, South Carolina and Illinois

(4) Importance of the transfer issue for Hispanic and Black students